



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

In January, Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* showed a decrease of 470 from December 2003 and a decrease of 330 jobs from January 2003. As has been the trend in previous months, small decreases were reported in almost all industries. While these decreases were small, they added up because they occurred in a large number of industries. Very few industries increased jobs, although *Manufacturing* rebounded with higher prices for lumber, paper, jet boats, and bullets, which is good news for the local economy.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- Major changes are in the works for Snowhaven Ski Area near Grangeville. The board of directors for the Ski Area has proposed an addition of a tubing hill. The project would require installation of a new towline. As proposed, it would be located on the down face of Diamond Flats and offer a 200-foot run. It would be the longest and fastest tubing hill in the Northwest. The strategy is to have the tubing hill up and running by next ski season. But the work doesn't stop there. The tubing hill is just the first step in a long-term expansion project for the facility, which is owned by the City of Grangeville and managed by a volunteer board. The board is hoping to generate enough revenue from the tubing hill to begin to expand ski runs, build a new lodge, and install a chair lift.

Clearwater County

- Orofino has been chosen as the Idaho community along the Lewis-Clark Trail that will unveil the new Lewis & Clark U.S. postal stamp. According to Orofino's postmaster, plans are to host the event at the Canoe Camp park May 14. The Orofino post office will accommodate what needs to be done with the stamp: selling them, hosting a first day of

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Jan 2004*	Dec 2003	Jan 2003	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	36,320	36,100	36,640	0.6	-0.9
Unemployment	1,260	1,380	1,440	-8.7	-12.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.5	3.8	3.9		
Total Employment	35,060	34,720	35,200	1.0	-0.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	36,440	36,260	36,770	0.5	-0.9
Unemployment	1,640	1,490	1,850	10.1	-11.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	4.1	5.0		
Total Employment	34,800	34,770	34,920	0.1	-0.3
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,330	26,800	26,660	-1.8	-1.2
Goods-Producing Industries	4,360	4,430	4,300	-1.6	1.4
Natural Resources & Mining	210	200	240	5.0	-12.5
Construction	980	1,040	930	-5.8	5.4
Manufacturing	3,170	3,190	3,130	-0.6	1.3
Wood Product Manufacturing	560	560	590	0.0	-5.1
Food Manufacturing	60	60	100	0.0	-40.0
Paper Manufacturing	1,220	1,220	1,130	0.0	8.0
Other Manufacturing	1,330	1,350	1,310	-1.5	1.5
Service-Providing Industries	21,970	22,370	22,360	-1.8	-1.7
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,410	5,530	5,370	-2.2	0.7
Wholesale Trade	590	600	640	-1.7	-7.8
Retail Trade	3,550	3,670	3,490	-3.3	1.7
Utilities	90	90	80	0.0	12.5
Transportation & Warehousing	1,180	1,170	1,160	0.9	1.7
Information	350	350	380	0.0	-7.9
Financial Activities	1,820	1,820	1,870	0.0	-2.7
Professional & Business Services	1,360	1,390	1,420	-2.2	-4.2
Education & Health Services	3,970	3,950	4,010	0.5	-1.0
Leisure & Hospitality	2,450	2,570	2,470	-4.7	-0.8
Other Services	1,070	1,090	1,080	-1.8	-0.9
Government Education	2,260	2,370	2,240	-4.6	0.9
Government Administration	2,410	2,430	2,740	-0.8	-12.0
Government Tribes	870	870	780	0.0	11.5

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

issuance ceremony, and providing a first day cancellation of the stamp. Organizers of the event anticipate stamp collectors will travel from many areas to get first day cancellation stamp. A mobile post office will be provided by the postal service who also will provide postal employees to be on hand to sell the stamps and do the cancellations.

Latah County

- The Idaho Economic Development Council (IEDC) has recommended support for a grant of up to \$500,000 for the City of Moscow. IEDC's recommendation for the Rural Community Block Grant will be made to Governor Dirk Kempthorne. Money from the grant would be used to purchase a lot in the Alturas Business Park and to

construct a 12,000-square-foot building to be leased to Advanced Hardware Architectures, Inc, a local high-tech engineering firm. It will retain 18 high-salary jobs and create eight more. The City of Moscow is the sponsor of the grant, which was written by the Clearwater Economic Development Agency and by the IDEC. The City of Moscow has agreed to administer a \$45,000 Idaho Gem Community Implementation Grant. This grant money would be used to secure financing and permits, and to begin construction.

- The company formerly known as Alchemy Ventures has received 10 mineral leases from the Idaho Department of Lands, which will allow for clay mining in eastern Latah County. The company, now called i-minerals inc., has the authority to mine for feldspar, quartz, and clay on 4,649 acres of state land outside Bovill and Helmer. The company came to Latah County in 2000 and began a mineral research project. How profitable the mining operation will be is still to be decided, but the commodity is valuable because the Bovill-Helmer area is the only feldspar site in the Pacific Northwest. Feldspar, clay, and quartz can be used for products including paint, ceramics, brick, glass, tile, and even paper.
- The Palouse Surgery Center, a 9,700-square-foot building at 2300 West A St. (on the hill above Wal-Mart) is scheduled to serve its first patients in May. Backers of the center hope it will keep the medical community unified and provide quality services in less time and at a lower cost than the hospital. Moscow's Gritman Hospital is an investor in the surgery center, however the surgery center operates as a different organization with its own board of directors. Gritman has 60 percent of the shares in the hospital while 17 Palouse-area doctors have a 40 percent stake. The 17 doctors include approximately 75 percent of the surgeons who practice in the Moscow area. The doctors will do procedures and surgeries in 11 specialties, including orthopedics, gynecology, and oral surgery, plus pain management. The new surgery center was developed in part to give surgeons with privileges at the hospital alternatives for extra work instead of operating private clinics, and to pre-empt any private, out-of-town franchises from opening a clinic in the area.

Nez Perce and Asotin (WA) Counties

- Lewiston residents could be lining up in front of a new multiscreen theater in November if a Pullman developer's plans are on schedule. Plans have been announced to develop a 36,000-square-foot 12-screen cinema complex at the Nez Perce Plaza on Lewiston's Thain Grade. The new Lewiston theaters will range in size from 78 to 225 stadium-style seats for a total capacity of 1,600 people. There also will be

a party room for birthday parties and other pre- or post-movie events.

- One of the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley's high-tech employers is likely leaving and transferring its operations to two other Washington communities. Isothermal Systems Research (ISR) wants to move about half of its 35 to 40 Clarkston employees to a research and development center in Pullman at the Port of Whitman County's industrial park. The remainder are moving to ISR's Liberty Lake, Washington, site, which opened in 2002, where a majority of the company's 130 workers are already headquartered. The Liberty Lake site focuses on engineering and development of spray-cool systems for computers. Manufacturing will be moving from Clarkston to Liberty Lake in a couple of months. The change at ISR is just one example of the shifts of high-tech jobs occurring in the region.
- Comtech AHA, which designs computer chips, is hoping to move from the Port of Whitman County industrial park to Alturas Business Technology Park in Moscow. The company employs 19 people and expects to experience gradual, sustained growth in the upcoming years. The incentive packages created for ISR in Pullman and Comtech AHA in Moscow show how far economic development organizations will go to attract high-tech jobs. The Port of Whitman County is seeking a \$600,000 loan and a \$200,000 grant from the Community Economic Revitalization Board to build a 13,800-square-foot building for ISR. The port is providing a match of cash and land totaling \$770,000. The lease rate for the building would likely be below the market rate, according to port officials. The City of Moscow hopes to receive a \$500,000 grant from the State of Idaho to help construct a 13,000-square-foot building for Comtech AHA. The entire cost of the package, including real estate acquisition, is estimated at \$1.3 million. The amount not covered by the grant will be borrowed. If the Moscow deal evaporates, Comtech AHA will likely take advantage of a similar package offered by the Port of Whitman County. Communities are willing to work hard for a single employer because high-tech companies tend to bring quality jobs to an economy. Such jobs pay well and the people who hold those jobs tend to be very involved in the community by supporting the arts and various activities. At AHA, for example, many of the jobs pay more than \$50,000 a year.

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